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Viewing cable 10CARACAS91, A Trio of Cabinet Resignations Sparks Speculation

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#10CARACAS91**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
10CARACAS91	2010-01-26 23:12	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Caracas

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.semana.com/mundo/wikileaks-venezuela-ramon-carrizalez-vicepresidente-marido-solidario/159502-3.aspx>

VZCZCXRO8647
OO RUEHAG RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHHO RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHROV RUEHRS
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DE RUEHCV #0091/01 0262313
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 262312Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0357
INFO WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 000091

SIPDIS
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PASS TO AMEMBASSY GRENADA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PASS TO AMCONSUL QUEBEC
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PASS TO AMCONSUL RECIFE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/01/26

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SUBJECT: A Trio of Cabinet Resignations Sparks Speculation

REF: 10 CARACAS 33; 10 CARACAS 77; 10 CARACAS 3

¶1. (C) Summary. On January 25, the Venezuelan government (GBRV) confirmed the resignation of Vice President and Defense Minister Ramon CarrizC!lez, his wife and Environment Minister Yubiri Ortega, and Minister of Public Banking and President of the Bank of Venezuela Eugenio Vasquez Orrellana. The unexpected resignation of CarrizC!lez, who had been the point person for recent attacks against the United States, has generated considerable speculation. General Carlos Jose Mata Figueroa, head of the Strategic Operational Command, has assumed the duties of Defense Minister. The position of Vice President currently remains open. End Summary.

Rumors about Carrizalez' Reasons

¶2. (SBU) President Chavez accepted the resignation on January 25 of Vice President and Defense Minister Ramon Carrizález. Local press reported that Carrizález and his wife, Environment Minister Yubiri Ortega, had tendered their resignations on January 23. Carrizález cited "strictly personal" reasons for his resignation and said that any other reason attributed to his resignation would be "false and biased."

¶3. (C) Nevertheless, speculation among pundits abounds. Carrizalez had recently appeared as the force behind President Chavez' denunciation of the alleged U.S. military overflight of Venezuelan airspace (ref a) and U.S. and Dutch intentions to use Curacao as a base for military operations against Venezuela (ref c); Chavez later walked back this obviously false allegation by saying the alleged pilot had shown no hostile intent (ref b). Some pundits, XXXXXXXXXXXX, speculate that Carrizález, a former armor officer, resigned in protest over the decision to install four Cuban generals into the Bolivarian National Armed Forces, something permitted under the 2008 military reform but apparently not previously done.

¶4. (C) Other pundits claimed that Carrizalez and Diosdado Cabello, Minister of Public Works and Housing, clashed over control of the military promotion lists. Cabello, a former military officer and co-conspirator in Chavez's 1992 coup attempt, reportedly used to review promotion and assignment lists of senior officers during the tenure of the previous defense minister. However, when Carrizález assumed the position, he began placing his own candidates in key positions. The blogosphere carried another version of the Carrizalez-Cabello conflict: that Carrizález resigned over Cabello's crackdown on RCTV, concerned that a heavy-handed approach would galvanize the student movement and bring unneeded international opprobrium on Venezuela.

¶5. (C) Political pundit XXXXXXXXXXXX speculated that the Carrizález resignation had a more personal angle. According to XXXXXXXXXXXX, Chavez was accompanied to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference by the Environment Ministry's Director of International Cooperation, Claudia Salerno, who captured Chavez' attention with her fiery anti-capitalist and anti-American rhetoric. Chavez wanted to promote her to Minister of the Environment, thereby displacing Carrizalez's lackluster wife Yubiri Ortega.

The Banker's Resignation

¶6. (SBU) The media has cited "sources close to Vazquez" attributing his resignation to disagreements with Finance Minister Jorge Giordani and poor health. Vasquez also has been long tied to Carrizález, dating back almost ten years to when Carrizález headed the Urban Transportation Fund (FONTUR) and Vazquez was his financial manager. Some have claimed that Carrizalez was responsible for his appointment.

¶7. (C) Comment. Post has not yet heard an explanation that makes sense of Carrizalez' resignation. Post would find it odd that Carrizalez would resign over the role of the Cubans or RCTV. Rumors that Chavez planned to announce a change in the Cabinet and the Vice Presidency have circulated for the past month. End Comment.
CAULFIELD